DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 321 061 CE 055 158

| | |
|---|---|
| AUTHOR | Sasaoka, Taichi |
| TITLE | How To Prepare Materials for Neo-Literates. Literacy Lessons. |
| INSTITUTION | International Bureau of Education, Geneva (Switzerland). |
| PUB DATE | 90 |
| NOTE | 17p.; For other "Literacy Lessons" booklets, see CE 055 128-167. Also available in French. |
| AVAILABLE FROM | International Bureau of Education, P.O. Box 199, 1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland. |
| PUB TYPE | Reports - General (140) |
| EDRS PRICE | MF01/PC01 Plus Postage. |
| DESCRIPTORS | Adult Education; Adult Literacy; *Adult Reading Programs; Developing Nations; Early Reading; Foreign Countries; *High Interest Low Vocabulary Books; Instructional Materials; *Material Development; *Reader Text Relationship; *Reading Materials; Reading Material Selection; Reading Skills |
| IDENTIFIERS | Asia Pacific Region; International Literacy Year 1990 |

ABSTRACT

Literacy materials are either for illiterate people or for neoliterate people (those who have attained limited literacy but might easily relapse if they do not practice reading with appropriate materials). Thirty-five kinds of prototype materials for neoliterate persons have been developed by the Asian/Pacific Joint Production Programme of Materials for Neo-Literates (AJP), and 27 of them have been translated into 16 vernacular languages in 10 countries. The majority of neoliterate people in developing countries live in the rural areas and in city slums, where access to written language is limited. According to an investigation in Malaysia, 3 years' absence of reading materials causes a lapse into illiteracy. Materials for neoliterate readers should improve their quality of life; be in their mother tongue; be simple, attractive, and interesting; include visual aids; suggest how to use different materials in combination; and allow readers to progress at their own rates. The steps in producing materials for newly literate persons are: (1) identify the needs of the target group through a field survey; (2) select a theme; (3) select the format, based on the literacy level of the target group, how and where the materials will be used, and the production costs; (4) prepare the script and illustrations; (5) edit; (6) finalize the captions and title; (7) field test; (8) revise; and (9) mass produce the materials. Distribution of materials for neoliterate people is the weakest link in the chain in development. (CML)

**********
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
**********

ED321061
CE 055 158

LITERACY LESSONS

INTERNATIONAL LITERACY YEAR

# How to prepare materials for neo-literates

by Taichi Sasaoka

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

J Adlung

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

INTERNATIONAL BUREAU OF EDUCATION



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

## INTRODUCTION

The Asian Cultural Centre for Unesco (ACCU) since its foundation in 1971 has carried out, as one of its main programmes, *the Asian/Pacific Co-publication Programme (ACP)* in close cooperation with Unesco and the Member States in the region. Under this programme, books for children such as *Folktales from Asia* and *Festivals in Asia* have been published.

In the planning meeting on the ACP held in 1979, a new approach in co-publication of reading materials for residents in rural areas was suggested. It was recognized then that most readers in rural areas were neo-literates, and a new programme began as the *Asian/Pacific Joint Production Programme of Materials for Neo-Literates (AJP)*. The present monograph is written based on experience gained in this programme.

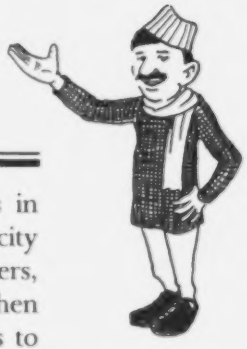
## MATERIALS FOR NEO-LITERATES

Generally speaking, literacy materials are categorized in terms of their target audience into two parts, i.e. materials for illiterates and materials for neo-literates. The term illiterates refers to those who have not been enrolled in any school or literacy class and therefore have no literacy skills, while neo-literates are persons who have attained a limited level of literacy, mainly because they have not completed elementary school, and might easily relapse into illiteracy if there are no appropriate reading materials for them.

In AJP, prototype materials (in English) for neo-literates which can be commonly utilized in the region have been co-produced. The final goal of the AJP is production and dissemination of the native-language version of the prototype for local use.

To date, thirty-five kinds of prototype materials have been developed, twenty-seven of which have been translated into sixteen vernacular languages in ten countries.

## LACK OF MATERIALS FOR NEO-LITERATES



The majority of neo-literates inhabit rural areas in developing countries, while many others live in city slum areas. In rural areas there are few newspapers, magazines and books to be distributed, and even when these are available, it is not easy for neo-literates to purchase the reading materials due to their economic situation. Moreover, literacy education, in comparison with formal education, lags far behind in institutionalization and systematization.

Under such circumstances, the neo-literate has little contact with written languages in everyday life. This often causes them to gradually lose the literacy skill once obtained, and finally to relapse into illiteracy. According to an investigation in Malaysia, three years' absence of reading materials causes neo-literates to lapse into illiteracy.

To aid in solving such problems, it is necessary to provide a large variety and number of effective reading materials of appropriate content for neo-literates. Such materials are indispensable for adult learners who have to work in the field in the daytime, leaving them time to study only at night or during leisure, in literacy classes or by themselves.

Production of materials for neo-literates is a very urgent task, for literacy for adults in rural areas is directly and immediately reflected in an improvement in daily life as well as increased productivity. In contrast, formal education needs more time for children to apply it fruitfully in actual life.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF NEO-LITERATE MATERIALS

*To prepare effective and attractive material for neo-literates, the following characteristics should be incorporated:*

- Materials for neo-literates should be useful for improving their quality of life. *Neo-literates will not read and write if they do not recognize the benefit of reading and writing. Therefore, most developing countries in the region have developed materials which not only provide them with help and the opportunity to practice their literacy skills but also convey useful knowledge and skills for improving their quality of life, i.e. information on civic education, health, hygiene, family planning, nutrition etc., and for improving their productivity, i.e. knowledge and skills in agriculture, animal husbandry, trade and industries, marketing etc.*
- The materials should focus on the real and immediate problems of the learners and the environment in which they live.
- *The language of the neo-literate materials is determined by the language policy of a country, but there is a general consensus that* neo-literate materials in the mother tongue of the learners are much more easily learned than are materials in other languages.
- The neo-literate materials should be simple, attractive and interesting. *Since neo-literates have relatively low levels of language skills the language used in the learning materials should be simple and straightforward, while the theme and topic should be suited to the level of maturity of the adult learners. Adult learners do not like to be treated as children. The neo-literate materials must be interesting to read, must create interest and sustain it, so that the adults will want to continue learning.*
- Neo-literate materials should utilize visual aids *such as illustrations, charts, photos and drawings as much as possible, and these should be* appropriate for the learners' interests and needs.
- *All types of neo-literate materials when viewed together should suggest how different materials could be used in combination.* The combination of different types of neo-literate materials aids in imparting difficult knowledge, *and helps to reinforce individual impact.*
- *The neo-literate materials should provide for progression at a rate of speed commensurate with the learner's individual ability.* Self-evaluation and group evaluation techniques should be integrated in each type of material.

The coming year 1990 has been declared International Literacy Year. Unesco has set the goal of eradicating illiteracy by the year 2000 in its APPEAL (Asian-Pacific Programme of Education for All). Programmes in this field should be encouraged and strongly supported.

## DATA NEEDED FOR DEVELOPMENT AND PRODUCTION OF MATERIALS FOR NEO-LITERATES

The first step in development and production of materials for neo-literates is to collect and analyse the data concerning the problems of the target group.

Identification of the problems and the needs of the target group through a field survey is very important, because the materials prepared should be based on and linked with learners' problems and needs to help them to improve their quality of life.

Points to be considered in surveying the needs of target neo-literates prior to production of material:

Clearly *identify survey goals; decide upon survey content* in detail before beginning the survey itself. (Unclear or incomplete content planning can result in overall failure of the survey.)

Clearly *identify target group:* (a) male/female; (b) occupational group(s); (c) age group(s); (d) region or location of residence; (e) classification by issues; (f) others.

Clearly *identify survey method* to be used: (a) observation; (b) interview – structured or unstructured; (c) distribution of questionnaire to be filled out; (d) unconventional methods.

Careful consideration of the nature of the target group and its situation leads to increased effectiveness.

*Determine who is to carry out the survey.* Select individual(s) who can bring the highest degree of survey effectiveness to the area being covered.

*Prepare compilation and organization of data* so that the information may rapidly be available for use.

## SELECTION OF THEME AND FORMAT OF MATERIALS FOR NEO-LITERATES

After collecting the data, next step in the production of effective literacy materials is to correctly analyse results of the field surveys concerning the learners' needs and problems, establish priorities, and choose the theme or topic of the materials. Once the theme or topic has been decided, it is important that the most suitable format for the theme be selected.

*Selection of theme*

In deciding upon a theme, the evaluation of needs produces basic data which guides the choice of appropriate theme: (a) First, set priorities based upon the respective degree of urgency and importance of each issue to be addressed. (b) Issues and items arranged by priority can then be listed by type, and a coherent chart devised to display the needs of the target group. (c) Assemble not only the producers of the literacy materials but also experts and other persons directly related to concrete issues and, referring to the chart, draw out the opinions and knowledge of these various specialists in a discussion. For example, specialists in agriculture, ecology, health and nutrition may collaborate with producers of the materials to arrive at a broader thematic concept and deeper content. (d) At this stage, themes should be decided, beginning with higher priority items, considering the (i) objectives, (ii) contents, (iii)

target group, (iv) method of application, and (v) place of application of the materials to be produced. (e) After the theme has been decided, consider what data will be necessary and whether or not there are any materials already in existence (particularly in the target area) that may be applied. Make a chart of such information, and prepare to move on to the next planning stage, that of format.

Theme decision based upon the opinions and needs of a wide variety of people rather than only preliminary surveys and research can be accomplished systematically by using a 'category' approach, itemizing each issue or problem by category.

POSSIBLE THEMES FOR MATERIALS FOR NEO-LITERATES

**Health:** *daily health; sanitation; balanced diet; common diseases.*
**Environment and science/technology:** *what is good environment; reforestation; science and technology in everyday life; energy (the sun, biogas).*
**Production:** *how to improve production; handicrafts and vocational skills.*
**Social and economic aspects:** *citizenship; cooperatives; community responsibility; family life; economic efficiency.*
**Culture:** *proper use of recreation and leisure time; cultural heritage.*

*Selection of format*

Points to be considered when selecting format are that the format of materials for neo-literates is decided on the basis of what may be most appropriate and effective for the content of the particular materials to be produced.

When intended expression of content is most appropriately matched to format (booklet, pamphlet, poster, game, audio-visual medium, etc.), the highest degree of effectiveness is achieved; if however, the proper format is not selected and content is not clearly and vividly conveyed, then the communicative effect is markedly diminished.

In deciding the format to be used, it is important to have knowledge of: (a) the needs and literacy level of target audience neo-literates, (b) the location and conditions in which materials are to be used, (c) the methods of application and their clarification, and (d) the production costs, process and means by which the materials are to be produced.

*Understanding needs and literacy level of target neo-literates*

As neo-literates seldom have enough time to study at school or special literacy classes, it is necessary when selecting a format to be aware of what type of format the target learners would like to use, even in a limited time frame. When producing posters and audio-visual materials to be presented to a group of people, it is particularly important that the literacy level of the group itself, as well as that of individual members, be known in order to employ an effective format for group use.

*Location and conditions in which materials are to be used*

It is necessary to know in what type of setting (environment conditions) the materials are to serve, and in what manner they are to be applied. Materials such as posters should be displayed prominently, over a long period of time, in locations where people assemble or on a large wall surface. Audio-visual materials normally require facilities and equipment such as electricity and slide projectors. The products or materials should take into account the locally available resources and the background of the target learners' culture, customs, preferences, etc.

*Methods of application and their clarification*

In producing materials for neo-literates such as games and comparatively thick books, care should be taken

that they do not require excessively detailed guidelines for their use by instructors. The format of materials must be carefully considered, so that the materials can be readily accepted and understood by the instructors. A format which includes complications or problems in application, or does not clearly and simply convey the intended message, should be avoided.

*Production costs*

Cost of materials production varies greatly, depending on the format used. It is important to determine the best possible format, process and supplies to be utilized within the budget set for the particular production.

**TABLE 1. Possible formats for materials for neo-literates**

| Category | Format |
|---|---|
| 1. Printed book | book<br>booklet<br>comics<br>etc. |
| 2. Printed non-book | poster<br>leaflets (flyers)<br>news periodicals and journals<br>flipchart<br>picture story-telling hardboard set<br>cards (flash cards, picture cards), etc. |
| 3. Electronics media | films (8 mm, 16 mm, etc.)<br>movies<br>videos<br>slides<br>tapes<br>radio and TV programmes |
| 4. Games and others | Conventional games<br>card games, jigsaw puzzles, 'future' games, games of finance (e.g. Monopoly)<br>board games such as sugoroku, etc.<br>simulation games<br>others: puppet show, shadow play, folk dance, songs, etc. |

*Characteristics of the main format of materials for neo-literates*

*Booklets:* a booklet is a printed and bound book of less than 100 pages. Booklets designed for neo-literates are made up of approximately ten to thirty pages, depending primarily upon the literacy level of target readers and the contents of the booklet.

A booklet is, basically, something to be kept by the individual and read at leisure whenever desired. Themes suitable for booklets should feature a well-ordered, easily understood series of explanations, or an easily understood story-like progression.

*Posters:* the basic function of a poster is to clearly present a message visually and directly to many people at once. While the poster is an effective means of conveying a lasting impression in a short time, communicating detailed information is not feasible.

Posters can be categorized as either campaign-type, designed to strongly project a single message; or instruction-oriented, illustrating and explaining through a single scene or series of scenes (which may be somewhat complicated) some useful information or knowledge.

Posters can be applied in a variety of ways, especially as instruction aids for beginning-level neo-literates.

*Games:* involving the element of play, provide an opportunity for learning almost unconsciously while enjoying playing, and as such are a very effective means of stimulating interest in participating learners.

Conventional games involve excitement and competition in pursuit of a goal, creating interest and encouraging participation. Otherwise uninteresting and difficult topics can be enjoyable worked out in a game environment.

However, as games have a tendency to represent things and issues in simplified form, particularly diffi-

cult or controversial themes cannot be effectively dealt with.

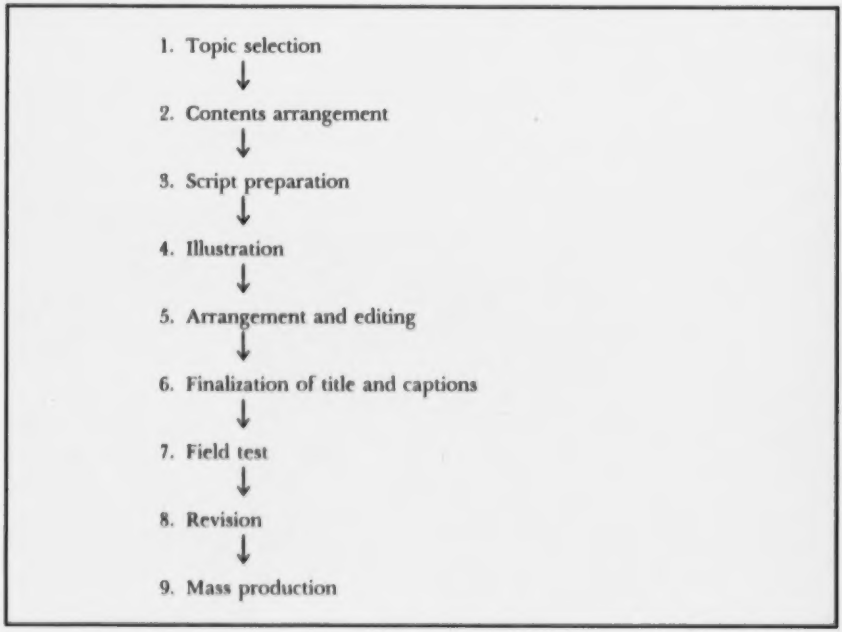
*Slide kits:* are one of the simplest audio-visual electronic media, comprised of a number of slides and a cassette tape on which explanation and/or background music and sound effects are recorded. By simultaneously showing slides and playing back the recording, learning enjoyably through eye and ear is made possible.

A topic can be impressively presented to a large group of people through this entertaining medium. Slide kit presentations can be a very effective source of motivation for the viewers. Then, through follow-up supplementary material and discussion, the instructional aspect can also be fulfilled.

# PROCEDURE FOR DEVELOPING MATERIALS FOR NEO-LITERATES

After deciding the theme and format of the material to be produced, the practical steps of material development, such as preparation and drafting of manuscripts and illustrations, pretesting, etc. will start. The steps of material preparation are shown in Figure 1:

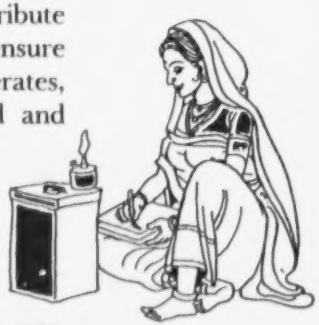
**FIGURE 1. Procedure in the development of materials**



# DISTRIBUTION, UTILIZATION AND EVALUATION OF MATERIALS FOR NEO-LITERATES



The problem of distribution of materials for neo-literates may be the weakest link in the chain of the present development programme. About 75% of the population in Asia and the Pacific live in rural areas or remote islands – this includes the majority of the neo-literates – while the distribution of books and learning materials is focused in big cities. There are many examples of non-supply of learning materials or non-utilization of very useful ones, and people contribute much to the lack of proper delivery systems. To ensure utilization of the learning materials for neo-literates, efforts should be made to develop organized and systematic distribution channels.



*Common methods of distribution of materials for neo-literates*

*Free distribution by governments:* In many countries, neo-literate learning materials are provided by the government, free of charge. These materials may also be delivered to rural areas through governmental departments or educational institutions.

*Various distribution channels:* In the countries of the region, there are also various distribution channels for neo-literate materials, which are very successful. For instance, the delivery system can take the form of rural libraries, adult education centres, community centres; even religious places, recreational centres and tea stalls can be utilized as delivery systems for neo-literate materials.

*Mobile libraries:* Mobile libraries are good and effective ways to distribute neo-literate materials, as well as serving the neo-literates in learning. Lending materials to the neo-literates should be encouraged.

*Mailing:* The distribution channels are insufficient at present in remote islands and rural residential areas in many countries in Asia and the Pacific. When there are no organized, systematic distribution channels, postal mailing is also an important form of delivery and should be utilized. One major problem is how to reduce the postal rates.

*Commercially based distribution:* wholesalers and retailers are the middle men between publishers and readers as well as the main distribution channels for books. The delivery of neo-literate learning materials can also make use of this channel. But the private publishers are not yet interested in publishing books and learning materials for neo-literates. The low purchasing power of rural neo-literates and the lack of distribution channels in the present stage does not offer the publisher sufficient return on investment.

In view of the economic conditions of most countries in the region, not only should neo-literate materials be produced at an extremely low price, but also the cheapest distribution methods should be found.

*Utilization:* of learning materials produced is a very important aspect of neo-literate materials development. It is the starting point of the learning materials production, and the end goal as well. It is not enough just to prepare and produce the materials. There must be proper mechanisms to motivate the learners to use the materials and help them to read.

## TRAINING OF WRITERS, ILLUSTRATORS AND PRODUCERS

Writers and illustrators may be trained through a neo-literate materials producers' workshop under the guidance of experts on material production. The training or workshop should have the following stages:

A general introduction of the writers and illustrators to the target group. This can cover socio-economic problems, role of education, adult psychology, neo-literacy materials, information about resources and resource agencies. It is desirable that the writer and the illustrator be taken to the actual places where the neo-literates live. This brings them close to the real conditions of the target group and helps them to express their ideas in realistic terms.

After the field trip, the material producers should be exposed to talks by subject matter specialists so that their information will be technically correct.

A detailed discussion on how to write for the neo-literate can be organized, covering e.g. selection of vocabulary, length of sentences, readability and comprehension, visual aids, etc.

The participants are then asked to prepare manuscripts on different topics with the illustrator preparing appropriate illustrations to reflect actual living conditions.

After the preparation of the manuscript, the writers/illustrators meet again so that their work can be read, discussed and adjusted in accordance with the criteria provided. The manuscript can be revised and then printed in limited copies for evaluation in both structured and unstructured situations. This is the field testing stage. The materials can then be revised again, reprinted and used.

For the evaluation, we should follow certain steps and a definite procedure. Generally, these steps are: (a) identification of the target group – its needs, problems and learning preference; (b) determination of the theme and objectives of the learning materials; (c) selection of appropriate format of materials; (d) development and production of the materials, including pre-field-testing; (e) use of these materials in the field; (f) evaluation of the materials used, and (g) revision of the materials based on the evaluation.

Evaluation, then, is an integral part of the programme. Its main function is to help arrive at educational decisions for the improvement of the programme and the attainment of it goals.

This publication has been produced by the International Bureau of Education within the context of International Literacy Year, 1990.

The International Bureau of Education acknowledges with grateful thanks this contribution by Taichi Sasaoka, Executive Director, Asian Cultural Centre for Unesco, to the cause of Literacy. Mr Sasaoka, born in Tokyo in 1924, graduated from the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies before entering the Japanese Ministry of Education, Science and Culture in 1947. He subsequently became Director for the Japanese National Commission for Unesco and, prior to assuming his present functions, Coordinator for Research, National Institute for Educational Research, Japan.

This document is available in English and French and can be freely reproduced, and translated into other languages. It would be appreciated if a copy of any publication reproducing this text in full or in part could be sent to: (1) ED/PBL, Unesco, 7 Place de Fontenoy, 75700 Paris, France; and (2) IBE, P.O. Box 199, 1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland.

Readers are reminded that the opinions expressed in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of Unesco. The designations employed and the presentation of the material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Unesco Secretariat concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area, or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

Published in 1990 by Unesco: International Bureau of Education,
P.O. Box 199, 1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland.